



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

Rep. Slaughter Announces \$20,000 NEA Grant to Support the Big Read in Rochester

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules and Co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, today announced a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Writers and Books, Inc. to support the Big Read program in Rochester. The Big Read program is part of an ongoing, nationwide effort by the NEA to foster literacy and encourage reading.

“Literature encourages thought, reflection, and imagination” said Rep. Slaughter. **“And good reading skills form the foundation for learning, productive employment and responsible citizenship. At a time when reading is rapidly declining among all age groups, I am pleased that many in our Rochester community will participate in the Big Read and reap the benefits of great literature.”**

The \$20,000 Big Read grant will enable Writers and Books, Inc. to engage the entire community – young and old – in reading and discussing *The Shawl* by Cynthia Ozick.

BACKGROUND

Writers and Books, Inc. in Rochester was one of 208 organizations nationwide that received grants to conduct an NEA Big Read program between September 2008 and June 2009. In addition to the grant money, the NEA will provide each participating organization with free support materials including Reader’s Guides for participants, Teacher’s Guides, Audio Introductions to the book, and a comprehensive website.

Since the program began in 2006, the NEA has awarded more than 530 Big Read grants and engaged more than 2,000 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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